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Marcos Jr. sentenced to 7 years in jail

MANILA, July 31 -- The only son of late Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos was sentenced Monday to seven years in prison for tax evasion and ordered to pay a fine of at least $2,812, plus back taxes. The same regional trial court judge who handed down the ruling later issued a warrant for the arrest of Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr., whom a Marcos aide said was out of the country. A spokesman for Judge Benedicto Ulep said the 37-year-old son of the late dictator is expected to appeal the ruling. The Philippines filed separate tax evasion charges against Bongbong Marcos in 1992 and 1993 for failing to file his income tax return from 1982 to 1985, when he served as governor of Ilocos Norte. Marcos also was ordered to pay the government an undetermined amount in back taxes, including the penalties and surcharges that have accrued over the years. A close associate of the former first family said Marcos left for France in late June and has not returned to the Philippines. The associate told United Press International that Marcos would be returning to the Philippines. The Marcoses were chased into exile in Hawaii at the height of a popular revolt in 1986 that toppled the 20-year rule of the former dictator. Former first lady Imelda Marcos and her son returned to Manila in 1991. In 1992, Mrs. Marcos ran for president and was fifth in a field of seven candidates. Her son ran and won a seat in the House of Representatives in the same year.

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The woman known worldwide for her 3,000 pairs of shoes was sentenced in 1993 to a maximum of 24 years in prison for graft and corruption, but she has appealed and is free on bail. Several other charges tied to the alleged plundering of some $5 billion from the country during her husband's rule are pending against Mrs. Marcos. In May, Mrs. Marcos won a congressional seat in her home province of Leyte, but she was disqualified by the Commission on Elections for failing to meet a one-year residency requirement for candidates.